

# She Rides Astride: Mateship, Morality and the Outback-colonial Girl

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She had grown just as the bush wildflowers grow – hardy, unchecked, almost untended –  
Mary Grant Bruce, *A Little Bush Maid*

## Introduction

Social historians, historians, and scholars of children's literature have eloquently argued that past and present-day transmedial representations of race and identity contain traces of "colonial ways of thinking and relating" (Bell 122) and are hence evidence of power-based relationships.<sup>1</sup> This trace is no less evident in the symbolic representation of gender and mateship in the popular culture and adventure fiction produced for girls and young women during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries – a period of socio-political change and upheaval. This article centres on the emergence of a feminine ideal peculiar to Australia, and to a lesser extent New Zealand, produced against the backdrop of nascent nationalisms and the cultural fascination with robust masculinity and mateship. In addition to taking its cues from the social historiography of women and girls in the colonies of Australia and New Zealand and the critique of feminine types in print culture and national children's literatures, the article employs an illustrator's perspective to unpack the cultural significance of the outback-colonial girl as a national type. The reason for this visual focus is twofold: to extend the scholarly inquiry into national children's literatures, which, as in the scholarship of Clare Bradford and Marcie Muir, tends to focus on authorship and the written word; and to draw attention to the critical role of immigrant graphic artists to Australia and New Zealand in visualising and fleshing out nascent national ideals and types.

The key texts for discussion are three early novels of the "Billabong" series produced by the iconic Australian-born writer Mary Grant Bruce and published between 1910 and 1920 by Ward, Lock & Co. In addition to interrogating the outback girl's emergence and development in the author's text, the article examines her symbolic depiction in three commissioned illustrations produced by the little-known graphic artist and immigrant to Australia, John MacFarlane. In examining the illustrations as evidence of the colonial girl's active and ever expanding role in the rural outback, the urban centre and the international arena, the article argues for the Billabong heroine as emblematic of the moral discourse permeating settler and outback mythology and of the virtues of independence and self-reliance intrinsic to mateship and the phenomenon of the New Woman (White 77). It contends that while the author's text and illustrator's images reaffirm the societal view of girls and women in paternalistic settler societies, they also offer a gendered alternative to the masculine ideal valorised in print media and popular culture. As will be shown in the graphical analysis of the Billabong heroine from her hardy outback beginnings to her status in the grand narrative of World War I, Norah embodies the consolidation of national cultural values as well as the desire of the colonial self for self-determination and autonomy.

## The outback-colonial girl in the Australian imaginary

Book historians assert that "federation anxiety about national identity, along with a fascination with the Australian girl and her place in the home of the nation, created a ready market for girls' books written and published in Australia" (Scutter 300). Heather Scutter

assigns the establishment of the London-based publisher Ward, Lock & Co.'s agency in Melbourne as the causative factor inspiring this development. Under the direction of William Steele, this agency fostered local Australian writers complementing the talent promoted by the Melbourne-based publisher George Robertson & Co. One of Ward, Lock & Co.'s talents was Gippsland-born Mary Grant Bruce (1878-1958). The other was John MacFarlane (1857/8-?), a prodigious graphic artist who arrived in Sydney aged 25/6 and resided in the suburbs of Prahran and Caulfield until approximately 1899. In addition to contributing to the success of Australian-based publishing houses Ward, Lock & Co., George Robertson & Co., and MacMillan and Co., MacFarlane produced illustrations for the Sydney-based *Bulletin* and the *Illustrated Australian News* as well as the *New Zealand School Journal*. Although Ethel Turner (1872-1958) similarly cultivated a feminine ideal particular to suburban New South Wales and, accordingly, "showed the world what we were really like" (Cross 12), it was Bruce and MacFarlane who filtered the colonial girl through the imaginary and mythic spaces essential to bush and outback mythology. By creating Norah Linton of Billabong Station as the central figure around which an adventure and pastoral ethos revolved, Bruce further inverted the masculine mythology apparent in pre- and post-Federation Australian illustrated adventure tales. Moreover, by conceptualising Norah as occupying a rightful place alongside the men of the bush and outback she subverted the meekly subservient and one-dimensional characterisation of women frequently found in male-authored adventure tales. In so doing, she provided her largely female audience with a spirited alternative to "the masculine exclusiveness of the bush ethos" and "the shearing shed" where "women were out of place" (White 101).

The three titles in Bruce's Billabong series that have been selected to support the argument for the outback-colonial girl as symbolic of an emerging ideal are *A Little Bush Maid* (1910), *Norah of Billabong* (1913) and *Captain Jim* (1919). These derive from the first six novels in the series, which tightly focus on the interrelationships between a widower pastoralist, Mr Linton, his only daughter, Norah, her older brother, Jim, their childhood friend, Wally, and key Aboriginal Australian, Chinese and female figures of the outback station and outback society. The first illustrated novel of the Billabong series, *A Little Bush Maid*, introduces the central character. Over the next nine years, Norah evolves from a twelve-year-old, motherless, free-spirited girl to a figure of independent womanhood who is supported by men but not inferior to them. From the isolated community of a cattle station in a depopulated region of the state of Victoria, the narratives of the first six titles in the series shift to accommodate socio-cultural and political themes contemporaneous to the period in which they were published. These broadly comprise family relationships, networks and fortunes, the social position of Indigenous, ethnic and female others within the outback hierarchy, the juxtaposition of rural and urban realities, class structures, and the impact of World War I on colonial nations.

Like her contemporary Vera Dwyer (1889-1967), who likewise specialised in featuring strong female types in her novels for girls, Bruce's heroine is a coded vehicle for imported and traditional discourses regarding the social role, and gendered place and conduct of women in society.<sup>2</sup> In characterising Norah as a principled and dutiful daughter in service to her father and brother, and the station, Bruce follows convention. However, in additionally characterising Norah as having a robust sense of self and as physically active in sites germane to the Australian imaginary (the outback, the newly-formed urban centre; England and the international theatre of war, Europe), Bruce modifies the conventions through which women and girls were popularly inscribed. The result is a lively image of colonial girlhood defined through the specificity of place and in the process of becoming.

Historians assert that in the Antipodean nations of Australia and New Zealand, women were understood as a stabilising and moral force, a conception that paradoxically affirmed their position politically and lead to success in emancipation (Denoon et al. 205). In contrast to their middle-class counterparts in England, and out of economic necessity, colonial women and girls were free to participate in arenas beyond the social distinctions and mores of conventional, British society. While fulfilling the roles of wives and homemakers, they “managed farms” and pursued useful and satisfying careers in public health and education (Dalziel 188). Moreover, the progressive world of commerce and business enterprise accompanying settlement meant that colonial women and girls could aspire to modern careers in management and administration such as typists and post and telegraphic assistants, or, as signalled by one of the colourful female characters in *Norah of Billabong*, bush postmistress. Liberated to an extent from the confines of traditional gender roles such as the “domestic ornament” and “angel in the house,” the coming girls of the colonies consequently attained a greater degree of independence and purposefulness than they had previously been able to achieve in Britain. The result, in the Antipodes, was the establishment of a new feminine ideal and status symbol, “the true ‘helpmeet’” who although in service to her man (father, brother, uncle, employer or husband) was also in service to society and the national ideal (Dalziel 57).

Dalziel, Denoon et al. and Schaffer further assert that in addition to their conflation with moral currency, women and girls were invested with virtues that were popularly disseminated nationally and internationally as consonant with national identity. A case in point is the sketch entitled “The Australian Girl” by David Henry Souter appearing in the *Lone Hand* in 1912. Souter (1836-1935) was a contemporary of MacFarlane and contributor to the *Lone Hand* whose satirical observations of aspiring urban society were punctuated with a graphic flair for caricature.<sup>33</sup> Under his pen, women were stereotypes sheathed in tightly fitting clothes permitting little mobility but fully revealing their bodies to masculine and, I suggest, misogynist viewing. His satirical appraisal of the fashionably modern represents the conflicting attitudes in the representation of the modern woman in popular culture. On the one hand, dominant cultural institutions such as the illustrated press endorsed the emergence of this feminine type. On the other, they continued to tacitly uphold the traditional notions embedded in late-nineteenth century gender-based discourse and extending, indirectly, from Victorian and Edwardian proprietorial attitudes regarding the status and position of women in civilised society.

Four years prior to Souter’s visualisations for the illustrated press, a travelogue written by Florence MacDonald appeared in the popular and widely distributed the *Girl’s Own Paper*. Entitled “Some Themes I Saw in Australia,” MacDonald’s account is unique in that it discloses an entirely different view of womanhood, one that is evocative of the capable and self-reliant women and girls inhabiting the red continent’s settled and, seemingly, unsettled spaces. The author claims that an

Australian girl is generally able to turn her hand to anything, and is as courageous as she is resourceful. She knows how to saddle and groom a horse as well as how to cook a dinner; she is deft with hammer and nails as with needle and thread; and in many cases she can handle a gun, which is a useful accomplishment to one who has to often rely on her own resources. (282)

MacDonald’s contribution to this popular publication affirms the perception of the colonial woman and girl as actively participating in a more extensive range of duties than those traditionally performed by her counterpart in Britain. Her frank assessment of the Australian

girl's abilities, and not her looks, contradicts Souter's graphic lampooning of stylish urbanites made almost immobile by their improbable hobble skirts. The feminine ideal subsequently conveyed by the *Girl's Own Paper* to its national and international readers is independent, resourceful, courageous and active. Competent within the domestic sphere, she is equally adept at the virile and muscular activities normally the domain of men and boys.<sup>4</sup> As will be evident in the following unpacking of outback resourcefulness and independence, and national identity, the type of womanhood encountered by MacDonald on her travels found symbolic expression in Norah, the imagined ideal and protagonist created by Bruce and, as I shall suggest, expertly visualised by MacFarlane for the key titles considered in this article.

### **The constant mate**

This final section is a chronological examination of the cultural capital of the Billabong heroine within key locational contexts of the outback, the urban centre and war-torn Europe. This examination traces her representation in image and text from youthful, adventurous and risk-taking tomboy to her consolidation as an icon for the moral vigour and youthfulness associated with Australia and New Zealand national types.

In the first novel, *A Little Bush Maid*, the plot centres on Norah and her position within the world of Billabong station, imagined by the author as a close-knit and well-run outback cattle station in rural Victoria. The heroine is an astride-riding, twelve-year-old tomboy who excels at bushcraft and who prefers nothing better than to race, fish, trap rats and explore over girlish activities, such as playing with dolls. As first-generation Australian-born she symbolises a new world order that seeks to separate itself from tradition, and from the limitations of polite and correct society. Thus central to the plot are the relationships the heroine has with the cattle station hierarchy, a hierarchy made up of Europeans and Aboriginal Australians, ethnic others and unpredictable, malicious, and wanton vagrants. Next to her father, Jim, and Wally, those positioned closest to the heroine are the large and affable female cook, Mrs Brown; the trusted Aboriginal stable hand, Billy; the Chinese vegetable gardener, Lee Wing; and the Scots rose gardener, Hogg. Her "boyish and offhand" (Bruce *Little* 18) interactions with these few friends are lively and spontaneous, and include cattle droving and organising station events. They consequently position the heroine as outside mainstream society and, as a type, diametrically opposite to the cultured, urban ideal symbolised by her exquisitely tailored and materially-oriented first cousin, Cecil.<sup>5</sup> In addition to establishing the heroine's status and character, the plot deals with immediate and lesser threats to pastoral life such as arson and escaped prisoner activity, as well as encounters with the transient and exotic. Through these focused themes, Bruce establishes prepubescent Norah as a symbol of difference and an emergent ideal for a nation in formation.

The illustration that best represents the heroine as independent and muscular is the visually and physically immediate frontispiece created by MacFarlane for *A Little Bush Maid* [Fig. 1]. The content covered in this illustration derives from a point in the narrative where Norah is out riding with Jim and Wally. The illustrator's spatial organisation of the protagonist and her companions, one of whom is shown taking a nasty tumble, within the page dimensions and format is both deliberate and symbolic. In alluding to the outback as a place of adventurous license, as well as a place of inherent physical danger, the illustration makes clear to the reader that the heroine of this title, and of the series, is informed by values matching those applied in the cultural formation of national identity, namely independence, egalitarianism and self-confidence. The free-spirited, freedom-loving protagonist is literally and symbolically her widower father's "little mate," a term employed by the author to distinguish the astride-riding heroine from the otherwise male society of the cattle station. Instead of



**Figure 1 – Mary Grant Bruce, *A Little Bush Maid* (London, Melbourne, Toronto: Ward, Lock and Co., 1910) frontispiece.**

being psychologically incapacitated by this diminutive, Norah is empowered by it as she is by her father's parental ratification of her riding style. Mr Linton, not wishing his daughter to be physically deformed through riding side-saddle, readily allows Norah to ride astride like the men of the station. Thus depicted in this most prominent of tipped-in plates, she is consequently a metonym for the ideology of paternalism that Marcie Muir argues underpins Bruce's outback fiction, and a signifier for "the constitutional vigour" (Denoon et al. 210) marking pastoral and emerging national mythologies. For her audience, Norah is a rejuvenated action figure, one that is as courageous and egalitarian as she is independent and resourceful.

Independent and resourceful action types, however, require a sound body and a sound mind if they are not to become unseated physically, psychologically, or morally. In the next case

study, I propose MacFarlane's outback ideal symbolically embodies the *Girl's Own* editorial opinion that a sound body, combined with logical thinking, were requisite for any girl wishing to perform good work in the newly established urban centres of federal Australia. The second illustration demonstrating the consolidation of the coming ideal, and a further phase in the consolidation of national type, derives from the third novel in the series, *Norah of Billabong*. In this work, Norah, an adolescent attending boarding school in town struggles with deportment and what passes for good conduct in polite and elite all-female society. In addition to the focus on physical and psychological maturation, and colonial physical type as synonymous with the virtues of honesty and integrity, this novel centres on issues directly connected with modern city living. In particular, these concern the effect of contagious and untreatable disease such as polio, commonly known as infantile paralysis, as well as economic deprivation and lack of education on the urban poor and sub-classes. The pastoral idyll imagined in the first novel is sharply contrasted by the unglamorous reality of urban living and is further juxtaposed by the realistic description of outback townships and vagrant Aboriginal Australian camps as empty and decaying.

As with the previous frontispiece, this illustration is designed to visually communicate a particular moment in the narrative and to make explicit the ideological values contained in the author's text. At a literal level, it portrays the heroine Christmas shopping with her father [Fig. 2]. At the level of the symbolic, MacFarlane's spatial arrangement of key and secondary characters – the Lintons, and the crippled boy and the urbane shopper – constitutes a graphic endorsement of genteel pastoral society and a period critique of urban socio-economics. For national and international readers of the period, the Billabong heroine is no longer a freewheeling tomboy, but a youthful feminine ideal for the moral and physical robustness ideologically associated with the bush, the outback and the nation. By juxtaposing the physically unsound with the sound, and by showing the protagonist's purchase of the entire stock of balloons being sold by the importunate cripple, MacFarlane adds further dimension to Bruce's authorial voice. Through this illustration, he effectively signals that the Billabong heroine has evolved from a young girl who excels at riding, cracking a stock whip, trapping rats, and climbing trees into a socially proper action figure with subject agency, authority and purpose.

The illustrative representation of Norah and her father consequently typify the assumption prevalent in the 1890s of Australia's real and imagined pastoral spaces as sites of origin for a genteel nationalism, and its urban centres as sites of physical degeneracy and moral and fiscal decline (Denoon et al. 218). This preference is not only apparent in *Norah of Billabong* but it also extends to Bruce's representation of male and female protagonists beyond the Billabong series.<sup>6</sup> The societal concern with moral soundness and mental and physical wellbeing were not singular to Bruce but were topics common to the girls' magazines of the period, as was the incipient threat of war. In the sixth novel of the series, Bruce's outback heroine evolves accordingly into an iconic figure and transportable sign, a semiotic message holder for the virtues of moral and physical fitness, which, when linked to the grand narratives underpinning federal and national identity, became solidified as assets and essential to the rhetoric of modern war. In the final image for discussion, I examine MacFarlane's grown-up feminine ideal as responding to the social and political changes taking place with the advent of World War I and as symbolising a watershed in the cultural formation and production of the national self.





**Figure 2 – Mary Grant Bruce, *Norah of Billabong* (London, Melbourne, Toronto: Ward, Lock and Co., 1913) 59.**

After meeting hardships in the crucible of the outback, and demonstrating her ability to deal with infirmity and pathos, Norah's maturation from colonial tomboy to poster girl for a robust national type culminates in the Billabong novel *Captain Jim*. In addition to the grand narratives of war and national identity, this novel centres on English, Irish and colonial world-views, traditional class-based systems and networks, as well as the effect of international affairs on colonial vitality and the construction of the Anzac myth. Norah, now on the cusp of adulthood and based in London, inherits a substantial property "Homewood" from an elderly Irish statesman, which she subsequently transforms into a self-supporting rest home for the war disabled, and a home away from home for lonely and isolated Australian servicemen serving overseas (Bruce *Captain* 18, 35). While she is engaged in this national war service, Jim and Wally are serving in the infantry in Flanders. Wally returns home to

Homewood without Jim, who is presumed dead, but is, in fact, imprisoned and wounded. He also survives his ordeal in Europe's fields of war and arrives back in time for Christmas to restore the inviolability of the family unit.

In this war-inspired novel, the author draws on the events particular to the colonies' international engagement to strengthen the cultural perception of the Australian outback-colonial as symbolically extending from the moral discourse contained in outback and bush mythologies. Unlike the "heroic" ideal encapsulated by Jim and Wally, Norah's role does not allow for engagement in the machinery of war, such as nursing at the front or service in the ammunition factories of the armament industry. Instead, her war vehicle provides yet a different opportunity for action, one that appears to frame the outback protagonist within the gendered discourse of domestic self-sacrifice and meek subservience. Her novel consequently provides her readers with a view of active duty that is no less patriotic and no less heroic than the rhetorical images of women patriotically serving the war effort in girls' annuals and lithographic posters.<sup>7</sup> This sees the self-assured heroine resolutely engaged in social activism against the establishment, symbolised in this novel by Homewood's "important upper servants" (Bruce *Captain* 66), while at the same time preserving colonial morale and identity within its interior and exterior domestic spaces.

As in the earlier books in the series, Bruce continues to deploy the Billabong heroine as the primary figure to comment on social mores and colonial and imperial world-views, thus strengthening the heroine's cultural performance and capital over time. In *Captain Jim*, Norah functions as a recognisable sign for nationalist pride, philanthropy and self-sacrifice, and an iconic referent for political differences in imperialist and colonial views and value systems. For the conservative, class-oriented domestics of Homewood, the unconventional and irreverent heroine is "immature" and a "flapper" (Bruce *Captain* 130). In their eyes, she effectively embodies the subaltern other coming, as she does, from the outpost of the Empire – a fantastical place of "Bushrangers, and savage natives, and gold-mining" (Bruce *Captain* 130). The social niceties and conventions by which she is perceived, however, do not undermine the protagonist's view of herself as autonomous and independent, and as possessing a distinct social and national self. With outback authority, she spiritedly turns her hand to applying the restorative power she has acquired in growing up, and, in the process, cements her cultural status as equal to the legendary war figures and national types of the Anzac and the digger.

MacFarlane's illustration of Norah, Jim and Wally watching the local horsemen and women of London ride up and down Rotten Row is, in effect, a gendered representation of the ingredients central to the construction of the Anzac ideal [Fig. 3]. In symbolically communicating the physical values intrinsic to World War I nationalist narratives, it functions, for Antipodean readers, as a piece of contemporary war propaganda. The terrible consequences and costs of combat, physical and mental incapacitation, and the drain on national vigour (White 127) tacit in the following extract are not represented in the illustration.

They had joined a famous British regiment, obtaining commissions without difficulty, thanks to cadet training in Australia. But their first experience of war in Flanders had been a short one; they were amongst the first to suffer from the German poison-gas, and a long furlough had resulted. (Bruce *Captain* 14)

Instead, MacFarlane's idyllic representation upholds the cultural fascination with the constitutional vigour and patriotic sentiment contained in pastoral and settler mythologies and





Figure 3 – Mary Grant Bruce, *Captain Jim* (London, Melbourne, Toronto: Ward, Lock and Co., 1919) 16.

woven into narratives of war. In this illustration demure Norah appears a passive antithesis to her familiar role as an independent and spirited action figure. However, when viewed from Schaffer's Lacanian perspective, and the role of colonial women and girls in consolidating myths of war, the symbolic arrangement of the key characters suggests something different. In signalling moral support, gendered mateship and "egalitarian ethic" (Denoon et al. 271), MacFarlane's oval arrangement reaffirms the critical role of the "help-meet" or "help-mate," as she was called in New Zealand, as vital to the construction of the independent Anzac ideal as she was to nation building. MacFarlane's representation of "little mate" as having reached adulthood, and her girlhood companions as having survived the hostilities, is subsequently a piece of political rhetoric and positions the heroine as being at one with and hence equal to the men.

According to semiotic theory, reader recognition of and identification with the cultural codes embedded in the symbolic may be attained through repeated exposure to one graphic form, as, for example, school children's exposure to the large format posters of early Australian exploration that MacFarlane produced for George Robertson and Co., and which were subsequently printed as teaching aids and disseminated to schools.<sup>8</sup> In the case of the Billabong heroine, however, the encoding of the symbolic is developed and consolidated through consistent and sequential representation and visualisation in image and text over time. This repetitive process ensures reader association with her character transcending the hegemonic representation and mediation of the male hero in tales of discovery, exploration, settlement and war. In the reading of this and the former two texts, the theme of masculinity is not supplanted but an argument is made for outback-colonial girls and women possessing a virile presence and iconic status equal to men. This is not the seemingly inclusive "second-rate masculinity" acquired through being "clever with horses or being a 'tomboy'" (White 83), but a presence acquired through emancipated participation in, and across the rural outback, the urban centre, and the international arena at every stage of their lives.

### Conclusion

In concluding this article, I would like to return to Souter and cite another of his observations regarding the merits of the coming girl:

Compared with her sisters of other parts of the globe, the Australian Girl has a particular claim on our affections because of her immediate and unfailing proximity ... She walks with a freer step, talks with a wider intelligence, and meets you on a more level plain of equality than the girl born and bred under conditions less kindly than those obtaining in Australia. (272)

Through her outback creation, Mary Grant Bruce provided her national and international readers with a distinct and particular view of colonial girlhood. In conceptualising her ideal as at the centre of Billabong Station, and as independent and equal to men, she inverted the exclusive and gendered categorisation of women and girls central to the bush ethos. While Bruce conceptualised the character of Billabong's "little mate" within the paternalism and mateship of the narrative text, it was left to immigrant graphic artist, John MacFarlane, to flesh out her visual likeness. Through his evocative depiction of the heroine and her rural and urban engagements and encounters, we have the outback-colonial girl first visualised as a modern alternative to the imaginary and legendary masculine figures of print and popular culture.

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Avril Bell; Claudia Bell and Steven Matthewman; Donald Denoon, Philippa Mein-Smith, and Marivic Wyndham (eds); Kay Schaffer; Richard White; Clare Bradford; and Maurice Saxby.

<sup>2</sup> Vera Gladys Dwyer was a Tasmanian novelist, a protégée of Ethel Turner, and, according to Zora Cross a "remarkable child writer" (12). Her titles for girl readers include *A War of Girls* (1915), *The Kayles of Bushy Lodge* (1922), *In Pursuit of Patrick* (1933) and *House of Conflict* (1933) amongst others. *A War of Girls* (1915) is set in Sydney and deals with the social role and status of women and girls in modern urban society. In this work, women and

girls are conceptualised as challenging male authority and patriarchal systems, and are characterised as accomplished, assertive, self-possessed and employed.

<sup>3</sup> Like many of his counterparts David Henry Souter was an interdisciplinary practitioner who in addition to being an illustrator, cartoonist and art editor, produced drawings for junior fiction such as Ethel Turner's *An Ogre Up-to-Date* (1908).

<sup>4</sup> The descriptor "muscular" is most often associated with the type of Christianity promulgated and practiced by the Victorians. In the early twentieth century the term was linked to masculinity and defined heroic endeavors such as the British Antarctic explorations of Robert Falcon Scott and Ernest Shackleton, as well as colonial service in the Great War.

<sup>5</sup> For same period graphic representations of the place of migrant Chinese and subcontinent Indians within Australia, see John MacFarlane's composite full-page illustrations for the *Illustrated Australian News*, 1 May 1891 (9) and the *Illustrated Australian News*, 1 September 1893 (17).

<sup>6</sup> See, for example, Bruce's novel *Gray's Hollow* (1914).

<sup>7</sup> See, for example, the recruitment poster created by Souter and captioned "HELP".

<sup>8</sup> The works referred to are held in the Heritage Collection of the Victoria State Library. Each photoengraving (44.3 cm x 63.4 cm) is a reproduction of one of MacFarlane's original watercolour (?) paintings (whereabouts unknown) featuring notable figures of nineteenth-century Australian exploration (Burke and Wills, Leichardt and Sturt amongst others).

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